

NEGRO MAKES APPEAL FOR JUSTICE IN COURT.

(By Associated Negro Press)

Miami, Fla., July 2.—Attorney R. E. S. Toomey, legal advisor and state organizer of the Negro Uplift Association, who recently headed a delegation that visited the state capital and presented to the president of the senate and speaker of the house of representatives a memorial urging that no color line be drawn in the making up of lists for jury service, addressed a letter to Gov. Catts in which he deplored the lack of consideration given the memorial by the state executive. To this letter Gov. Catts made reply that he had nothing to do with the disposition of the memorial by the senate or the house, but that he will endeavor to safeguard the interests of all people in Florida on a just basis.

"The Negro Uplift Association of Florida," wrote the colored attorney to the governor, "is not unmindful of the courteous reception and hearing accorded to its delegation (which recently waited on you) by your excellency, the president of the senate and the speaker of the house. It still regrets and deplores the lack of consideration given the memorial placed in your hands by the members of both houses.

"Feeling, however, confidence in your effort to have all officers keep the law and in your purpose to secure for all Floridians a square deal, we respectfully ask that you impress upon the sheriffs of each county the duty of including in their jury list all qualified citizens and requesting them to eliminate no such citizen because of race, color or previous condition of servitude.

"Trusting that the governor of the great state of Florida will see his way clear to grant this request and act in accordance on behalf of nearly one-half of the population of the state of Florida."

Charging that colored people are excluded from grand jury panels because of their race and color, John Epperson and Ethel Whitman, both colored, today entered plea of abatement in the Harrison County court. The man was indicted for violation of the prohibition law and the woman for shooting another woman. They ask that the indictments be quashed, citing a recent supreme court decision in McDowell county in which it was held that indictments against colored people were invalid if discrimination as to color was shown in drawing the jury.

PETITIONS VS. LEGAL PROCEDURE

Persons well known in Baltimore and Washington have directed to the President of the United States a "Petition," signed by a Committee of Citizens under the name of "National Up-lift League." The petition is in printed form and is being sold throughout both cities.

As far as effecting a means of propaganda among people in this section is concerned, the petition will undoubtedly have its effect. One of its articles petitions the President for "Mixed Juries of White and Colored fellow citizens, especially when one of the contestants is white and one is colored, and whenever the human life is at peril. We do not ask favors, our plea is for Justice."

In spite of the fine phrasing of this petition it can bring very few results that are definite. There is only one way to bring about trial by mixed juries, and that is through appeal to the Higher Courts, in Maryland and eventually, to the Supreme Court of the United States, using some specific case as a test case. The signers of the petition above referred to are not asking for something that is within the province of the President of the United States to grant. We will get mixed juries by hard work, and spending hard earned money, and not by any petitions.

ALBANY N.Y. JOURNAL
APRIL 24, 1919

NEGRO ACTED AS JUROR FOR FIRST TIME IN 20 YEARS

For the first time in nearly 20 years a Negro sat on a jury in County Court yesterday afternoon. He was juror No. 12 in the suit brought by Mamie Michaelo, 18, to recover \$1,500 from her uncle, Louis Ascoli. After Cobbs had answered the questions of the opposing counsel he was accepted. Throughout the trial Cobbs listened carefully to the testimony, and after the jury had brought in a verdict of \$1,250, he said he had enjoyed the experience.